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in the form of an English grammar, on the model of Lowth's, but with several improvements.

"Being perfectly satisfied," says he, "that some principles of Lowth's grammar, which constitutes the body of Murray's, are entirely erroneous, I have prefixed a brief grammar to this dictionary, which is committed to my fellow-citizens as the mature result of all my investigations. It is the last effort I shall make to arrest the progress of error, on this subject. It needs the club of Hercules, wielded by the arm of a giant, to destroy the hydra of educational prejudice. The club and the arm I pretend not to possess, and my efforts may be fruitless; but it will ever be a satisfaction to reflect that I have discharged a duty demanded by a deep sense of the importance of truth.—It is not possible for me to think with indifference, that half a million of youth in our schools are daily toiling to learn that which is not true. It has been justly observed that ignorance is preferable to error."

These are the sentiments of a sincere enthusiast, the workings of a heart giving vent to its feelings in strong unqualified expressions.

The author proceeds to point out some of the more prominent errors, which he has undertaken to correct. A brief summary of these will afford a more satisfactory view of the improvements he proposes to introduce, than any observations that we could offer in the condensed form to which we are bound to limit our remarks.

1. The admission of the article as a distinct part of speech; it being, always and in all languages, an adjective. 2. The arrangement of words, particularly of some of those commonly called pronouns, adverbs, and conjunctions, in a class to which they do not belong. 3. The want of a correct and complete exhibition of the verb in all its modifications of mode and tense. 4. The imperfection of the usual rules of syntax.

In the commencement of the grammar, where he treats of letters, he defines consonants to be the characters that represent the junctions, jointings or closings of the organs, which precede or follow the vocal sounds, and calls them by a very appropriate term, articulations. We think that one step more would have led him to a very simple and complete analysis of this primary and essential part of his subject.

Letters express either sounds or articulations: sounds are either simple, which we call vowels, or compound which are designated diphthongs; and articulations, commonly called consonants, are either close or perfect, which wholly intercept the voice, and therefore stop, or terminate the sound, or imperfect, which do not entirely interrupt the voice, but admit a kind of hum or hiss, and are thence commonly called semi-vowels. This two-fold classification will comprehend the whole of the letters in every language, according to their formation by the organs of speech.

In the classification of words, or what are commonly called parts of speech, he alters the names of some, rejecting, of course, the article altogether. Thus he names the pronoun, the substitute; the adjective, the attribute; the adverb, the modifier; the conjunction, the connective; and the interjection, the exclamation. Knowing, as we do, how much the study of chemistry has been facilitated, and its advancement consequently promoted, by a judicious nomenclature, in which the term fre-

quently implies or leads to the distinguishing character, we cannot object to the same principle being applied with judgment and caution to other sciences, and we think that the changes in the present instance, though not essential, will be found to be useful.

In the comparison of adjectives, or attributes, Dr. Webster recognizes four degrees. The first denotes a slight degree of the quality, and is expressed by the termination *ish*; as reddish; brownish: this may be called the imperfect degree. The second denotes such a degree of the attribute as to constitute an absolute or distinct quality: as red, brown: this is called the positive degree. The third and fourth he defines and names, like other grammarians, the comparative and superlative.

With respect to one of Dr. Webster's general rules for spelling, we feel inclined to pause before we acquiesce in its correctness. "In verbs of more than one syllable, when the accent falls on any syllable except the last, the final consonant of the verb is not to be doubled in the derivatives; thus, *bias, biased, biasing; worship, worshiper, worshipping*. The same rule is generally to be observed in nouns, as in *jeweler, jewel*. These," continues the author, "are general rules: though possibly special reasons may, in some instances, justify exceptions." We cannot but think that his love for generalizing has made Dr. Webster limit too closely the extent of the exceptions to this his general rule, which will be found to require very many, and, among these the very words he has selected for examples.

The introduction contains an anecdote relative to the well-known Lindley Murray, which we notice particularly, because, if true, it ought to be known; and if untrue, it ought to be contradicted. Dr. Webster says, that in the year 1803, he received a letter from Lindley Murray, with a copy of that writer's grammar, soliciting remarks on it. Twenty years before the date of this letter, Dr. Webster tells us, that he had published the grammar we have already spoken of; but as it had been prepared on the model of Lowth's, and as subsequent researches had convinced him that some of Lowth's principles were erroneous, he suppressed this grammar after it had been published, from a conviction of the immorality of laying before the public what he knew to be false. In 1807, he published a new grammar on new principles, and with a view to answer Murray's request, though in a different manner, he sent him a polite letter with a copy of it. These never reached him; but Murray received a copy of Webster's grammar from another quarter, and soon after published a new edition of his own English grammar in octavo, in 1808. In it he states, that he had examined the most respectable publications on the subject that had recently appeared, and had, in consequence, been the better enabled to extend and improve his work.

Now, let the reader hear what Dr. Webster says in continuation: "on carefully comparing this work with my own grammar, I found most of his improvements were selected from my book. In the first edition of this work, (Lindley Murray's new edition of his English grammar,) the compiler gave me credit for one passage only, being nearly three pages of my grammar, which he acknowledged to be chiefly taken from my work. In the later editions, he says, this is in part taken from my book; and he further acknowledges, that a few

positions and illustrations, among the syntactical notes and observations, were taken from my grammar. Now the fact is, the passages borrowed amount to thirty or more, and they are so incorporated into the work, that no person except myself would detect the plagiarisms, without a particular view to this object."

We join with the writer, if his statement be true, in his protest against such a species of immorality. A man's reputation and character, and writings, are as much his property as his land; and it is to be hoped that correct morality will, in due time, place the protection of the former on as high ground as that of the latter.

NOTICES OF BOOKS.

The Plays of Philip Massinger. Adapted for Family Reading, and the use of Young Persons, by the omission of objectionable passages. Vol. I.—London, Murray.

THE works of the old English dramatists abound in displays of the most powerful imagination and the richest fancy, couched in language the most forcible and expressive; but their exquisite beauty is so often marred by coarseness of expression, (for the licentiousness which disgraced the stage in Charles the Second's days, was the corruption of a later and more vicious age,) that they have long lain neglected, as unfit for the perusal of the pure and good. Under these circumstances, the editors of the Family Library have resolved on publishing a selection from the plays of Massinger, Fletcher and Beaumont, Ford, Shirley, and others, omitting all such scenes and passages as are inconsistent with the delicacy and refinement of modern taste and manners. The present volume contains a *Life of Massinger*, and four of the eighteen plays of his which are still extant—namely, the *Virgin Martyr*, the *Great Duke of Florence*, the *Bondman*, and the *Maid of Honour*. These are accompanied with preliminary notices and explanatory notes, which we rejoice to see are not overdone. We congratulate the public on having works of such transcendent genius thus placed within their reach, divested of all risk of injury or pollution from the contact.

The Correspondence and Diary of Philip Doddridge, D.D. &c. &c. &c. Edited from the original MSS. by his Great Grandson, John Doddridge Humphreys, Esq. Vol. III.—London: Colburn and Bentley.

WE must do the Rev. Doctor Philip Doddridge, D.D. the justice to acknowledge, that from our youth up we had considered him a very tedious stupid sort of writer, but we did not think him quite so great a fool as he proves to be, upon a farther and more intimate acquaintance. We should add, moreover, that it would require a very considerable stock of personal merit, to atone, in our eyes, for having been the progenitor of his present biographer, and great grand son, John Doddridge Humphreys, esquire, who has inflicted upon us so many ponderous tomes of silly gossip about miss Kitty, and miss Jenny, and miss Mercy, and all the other misses, and kisses, and youthful follies of his great grandfather, the dissenting minister. We really believe Doddridge was a well-meaning, good sort of man, according to his gifts, which were not of the highest or most refined description; but why we should be pestered, at this time of day,